

RTF 323-1

Experimental Film: History and Aesthetics

Fall 2002

10-12 TuTh

119 Louis Hall

Chuck Kleinhans

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office hours 3-5 Tu and by appointment

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permission of instructor required. Students must attend first class. Prerequisite: undergrad majors--completion of 100 and 200 level requirements; nonmajors RTF 220 or senior standing; grads: permission of instructor.

An introduction to the history and aesthetics of the film avant garde from the 1920s in Europe to contemporary US work. Emphasis is on exploring the range of experimental film practice and developing critical and aesthetic concepts for discussing avant garde work. A thematic unit on US work of the 50s, 60s, and 70s will consider the parallels between the Beat Generation, Pop Art and the Counterculture and contemporaneous film work.

The course combines screenings, lectures, discussions, readings, and off campus screenings. Films are the main texts for the course. Films will be screened in class and cannot be seen at other times. Thus attendance is important and will help determine the grade. Assigned work includes 5 short reports on field work in Chicago's experimental film and video scene and adjoining art world, an in-class midterm and a final. The final can be either a take-home or in-class (undergrad option).

Grad students will do additional reading and writing, including a take-home final. Grad students will have an additional screening/discussion section that will meet several times during the quarter 9-10 on Tu or Th.

Because the films screened are usually not available elsewhere, such as at regular video stores, it is very important to attend class. Students with repeated absences will probably find it difficult or impossible to complete the course. Three or more absences are considered excessive and will lower your grade.

Be aware: Most of the films shown in this course affront established mainstream values: aesthetic, social, political, moral, religious, etc. Some films contain (among other things) representations of nudity, violence, sexual activity (including various perversions), drug use, racial stereotyping, rape, infanticide, anorexia, bodily fluids, shakey handheld camera, blasphemy, as well as mocking of official government policy, Christianity, normative heterosexuality, patriarchal values, higher education, and suburbia.